



MassDEP's Wetland Circuit Rider Program

Accomplishments in Review

January to December 2012

2012 has been a busy year for MassDEP's Wetland Circuit Riders. In addition to providing outreach and training to conservation commissions throughout the state – they were also **Massachusetts Stream Survey Coordinators for the River and Stream Continuity Project (RSCP) in the sub-watersheds of the Ipswich, Chicopee and Buzzards Bay**. This project is part of an ongoing state, regional, and national effort to assess river and stream crossings (culverts, bridges, fords) to better identify and prioritize upgrades for improved fish and wildlife passage. Work was conducted during the low flow months of June through September.

With over 28,500 road and railroad crossings (culverts, bridges, fords) that affect our state's streams natural abilities to move water, fish and other aquatic organisms, MassDEP has partnered with UMass-Amherst, the Nature Conservancy, the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, and American Rivers on this project. By assessing these crossings, we enhance our information base to better identify and prioritize upgrades for improved fish and wildlife passage.



To enhance our ability to prioritize these crossings for improvements, the Wetland Circuit Riders trained and lead survey teams to assess road-stream crossings in the sub-watersheds of the Ipswich, Buzzards Bay and Chicopee. This past year alone, our Circuit Riders:



- Oversaw and completed **415** river/stream assessments in the three sub-watersheds
- Trained over **23** stream survey volunteers
- Conducted or coordinated over **11** Stream Continuity trainings.

In addition to RSCP and providing regional wetlands permitting support, Wetland Circuit Riders also offer quality outreach and training to local conservation commissions, other local officials, wetland applicants and their consultants, environmental groups, watershed associations and state and federal agency staff that is the hallmark of the program. This year they focused on a number of topics tailored to the needs of each region including:

1. Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) basics.
2. WPA Trail Development, Maintenance and Management.
3. A series of in-depth stormwater management and erosion control workshops for all municipal officials.
4. Stream Bank Stabilization Methods.
5. Providing instruction for the MA. Assn. of Conservation Commissions (MACC) for their **Fundamentals for Conservation Commissions Certificate series for units 3 and 6**.
6. Wetlands Protection Act and Lake Management
7. Stormwater Management and Erosion/Sediment Control for Wetland Resource Areas
8. eDEP hands-on demonstrations, trainings, and related work.

Circuit Riders provided regional wetlands staff with permitting review assistance and serve as MassDEP representatives for task forces, regional networks related to wetlands outreach/training. Some groups and organizations that they have worked with in this past year include: Mass. Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, Congress of Lakes and Ponds, Westfield River Watershed Assn, Charles River Watershed Assn., Ipswich River Watershed Assn, Mass Assn. of Conservation Commissions, Mass Assn of Municipal Conservation Professionals, Assn. of Massachusetts Wetlands Scientists, Mass. Dept of Transportation, Mass Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mass. Marine Fisheries, Federal Emergency Management Act, Mass Emergency Management Act, Mass Congress of Lakes and Ponds, U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Services, Mass Environmental Policy Act, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Berkshire Environmental Action Team, University of Massachusetts Amherst and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Accomplishments by the Numbers

9346 Responses to e-mails, phone calls and to walk-in requests on wetland related questions

Circuit Riders answer a wide variety of questions ranging from the simple to the complex on technical, procedural, or regulatory implementation of the Wetlands Protection Act.

111 Conservation Commission Meetings and Site visits

By invitation Circuit Riders to attend regularly scheduled Commission meetings to provide them with regulatory, technical, and procedural assistance. Commissions receive tailored assistance ranging from presentations on specific topics of interest to informal Q & A sessions. They also provide technical assistance at field sites upon request.

51 Regulatory, Policy ,Technical Workshops and Network Meetings

The Circuit Riders conducted wetlands related workshops throughout the state in the past year, many of which go beyond the fundamentals of the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) regulations.

16 eDEP Hands-on Demonstrations, Trainings, and related work.

2519 Regional Wetland Permitting and Related Activities

Circuit riders support the work of the regional wetland permit activities where needed and due to their extensive work with conservation commissions, they are able to provide the perspective of the commissions that they serve.

23 Task Force Meetings and Conferences Representing MassDEP

30 Organizations and Agencies Coordinated With